

Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION SS-30

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 13465

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1 & 3
TAGS: PFOR, LE, XF
SUBJECT: LEBANESE POSITION AT ALGIERS SUMMIT

BEGIN SUMMARY: THANKS TO RECEIPT AFTERNOON NOV 23 OF FULL TEXT SECRETARY'S NOV. 21ST PRESS CONFERENCE AND AFTERNOON NOV. 24 OF REPORT ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO'S TALK WITH LEBANESE AMBASSADOR KABBANI, PRESIDENT FRANGIE AND HIS ADVISORS LEFT FOR ALGIERS SUMMIT WITH WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF ATTITUDES USG TOWARD EVOLVING SITUATION IN AREA AND TOWARD PEACE TALKS. END SUMMARY.

1. UPON RECEIPT USINFO 231010Z AFTERNOON NOV. 23, WE DISTRIBUTED COPIES OF FULL TEXT SECRETARY'S NOV. 21ST PRESS CONFERENCE TO LOCAL PRESS, AND MADE COPIES AVAILABLE TO PRESIDENCY (DIRECTOR GENERAL DIB WHO SAID HE WOULD SEE THAT PRESIDENT READ TEXT). IN TALK WITH DIB LATE NOV. 23, WE POINTED OUT VERY POSITIVE ASPECTS OF SECRETARY'S REMARKS, NOTING THAT HE HAD EXPRESSED OPTIMISM ABOUT OPENING OF PEACE TALKS SOMETIME IN DECEMBER, AS ORIGINALLY ENVISAGED. WE OBSERVED THAT SECRETARY'S REFERENCE TO POSSIBLE BACKLASH FROM EXAGGERATED USE OF ARAB OIL EMBARGO MERELY STATED HARD FACTS OF SITUATION AS SEEN FROM UNITED STATES AND THAT WE HAD BEEN HEARING SAME SORT OF OPINION EXPRESSED HERE BY REPS OF WEST EUROPEAN EMBASSIES.

2. DIB SAID HE PLEASED TO HAVE FULL TEXT WHICH MUCH MORE POSITIVE THAN ACCOUNT CARRIED WIRE SERVICES AND COMMENTED ON (NEGATIVELY) BY ARAB PRESS. HE FULLY
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AGREED THAT SOME ARAB GOVTS. RUNNING RISK OF CARRYING

OIL EMBARGO TOO FAR, HE DESCRIBED THEIR USE OF NEWLY-EMERGED SENSE OF POWER AS IN SOME WAYS RESEMBLING THAT DISPLAYED BY ISRAELIS AFTER JUNE 1967 VICTORY WHICH SUDDENLY LEFT THEM FEELING INVINCIBLE. DIB SAID THAT JUST PRIOR TO DEPARTURE OF FONMIN NAFFA FOR ALGIERS, WEST GERMAN AMBASSADOR HAD MADE DEMARCHE TO NAFFA AND DIB IN NAME OF NINE EEC COUNTRIES, GENTLY POINTING OUT DANGERS OF EXCESSIVE ARAB PRESSURE ON EUROPEANS. DIB SAID LEBANESE WOULD DO WHAT THEIR MODEST DIPLOMATIC INFLUENCE ALLOWED TO EXPLAIN DANGERS OF EXAGGERATED USE OIL PRESSURE TO ARAB LEADERS AT ALGIERS.

3. WE ALSO DISCUSSED WITH DIB DANGERS OF ALGIERS SUMMIT ADOPTING HARD POSITION ON FUTURE OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WHICH COULD POSSIBLY JEOPARDIZE GENEVA PEACE TALKS. HE SAID THAT GOL FULLY AWARE OF THIS DANGER AND WOULD TRY AND DETER SUCH MOVE AS RECOGNITION PALESTINIAN GOVT. IN EXILE. THIS WOULD CREATE OBVIOUS THREAT FOR LEBANON AS WELL AS POSSIBLY JEOPARDIZING PEACE TALKS.

4. AMBASSADOR KABBANI'S REPORT OF EXCELLENT TALK WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO WAS RECEIVED IN FONOFFICE EARLY AFTERNOON NOV. 24 AND IMMEDIATELY PASSED BY FONOFFICE TO DIB FOR ATTENTION OF PRESIDENT FRANGIE, WHO DEPARTED FOR ALGIERS MORNING NOV. 25.

5. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT PRESIDENT FRANGIE LEFT FOR ALGIERS SUMMIT WITH GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF USG ATTITUDES AND THAT HE SHOULD BE HELPFUL IN SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO MODERATE ANY EXTREME ARAB POSITIONS. EARLIER RECEIPT OF FULL TEXT SECRETARY'S PRESS CONFERENCE WOULD HAVE BEEN USEFUL FOR FONMIN NAFFA AND HIS PARTY WHO LEFT MORNING NOV. 23 SOMEWHAT UNDER INFLUENCE OF UNBALANCED ARAB PRESS ACCOUNTS HEADLINING "THREAT" OF COUNTERMEASURES (BEIRUT 13448).
BUFFUM

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